8.19.1 SAND AND GRAVEL PROCESSING

8.19.1.1 Process Description[1-3]

Deposits of sand and gravel, the consolidated granular materials resulting from the natural disintegration of rock or stone, are generally found in near-surface alluvial deposits and in subterranean and subaqueous beds. Sand and gravel are products of the weathering of rocks and unconsolidated or poorly consolidated materials and consist of siliceous and calcareous components. Such deposits are common throughout the country.

Depending upon the location of the deposit, the materials are excavated with power shovels, draglines, front end loaders, suction dredge pumps or other apparatus. In rare situations, light charge blasting is done to loosen the deposit. The materials are transported to the processing plant by suction pump, earth mover, barge, truck or other means. The processing of sand and gravel for a specific market involves the use of different combinations of washers, screens and classifiers to segregate particle sizes; crushers to reduce oversize material; and storage and loading facilities. Crushing operations, when used, are designed to reduce production of fines, which often must be removed by washing. Therefore, crusher characteristics, size reduction ratios and throughput, among other factors, are selected to obtain the desired product size distribution.

In many sand and gravel plants, a substantial portion of the initial feed bypasses any crushing operations. Some plants do no crushing at all. After initial screening, material is conveyed to a portion of the plant called the wet processing section, where wet screening and silt removal are conducted to produce washed sand and gravel. Negligible air emissions are expected from the wet portions of a sand and gravel plant.

Industrial sand processing is similar to that of construction sand, insofar as the initial stages of crushing and screening are concerned. Industrial sand has a high (90 to 99 percent) quartz or silica content and is frequently obtained from quartz rich deposits of sand or sandstone. At some plants, after initial crushing and screening, a portion of the sand may be diverted to construction sand use. Industrial sand processes not associated with construction sand include wet milling, scrubbing, desliming, flotation, drying, air classification and cracking of sand grains to form very fine sand products.

8.19.1.2 Emissions and Controls[1]

Dust emissions can occur from many operations at sand and gravel processing plants, such as conveying, screening, crushing, and storing operations. Generally, these materials are wet or moist when handled, and process emissions are often negligible. A substantial portion of these emissions may consist of heavy particles that settle out within the plant. Emission factors (for process or fugitive dust sources) from sand and gravel processing plants are shown in Table 8.19.1-1. (If processing is dry, expected emissions could be similar to those given in Section 8.19.2, Crushed Stone Processing).

Emission factors for crushing wet materials can be applied directly or on a dry basis, with a control efficiency credit being given for use of wet materials (defined as 1.5 to 4.0 percent moisture content or greater) or wet suppression. The latter approach is more consistent with current practice.

The single valued fugitive dust emission factors given in Table 8.19.1-1 may be used for an approximation when no other information exists. Empirically derived emission factor equations presented in Section 11.2 of this document are preferred and should be used when possible. Each of those equations has been developed for a single source operation or dust generating mechanism which crosses industry lines, such as vehicle traffic on unpaved roads. The predictive equation explains much of the observed variance in measured emission factors by relating emissions to the differing source variables. These variables may be grouped as (1) measures of source activity or expended energy (e. g., feed rate, or speed and weight of a vehicle traveling on an unpaved road), (2) properties of the material being disturbed (e. g., moisture content, or content of suspendable fines in the material) and (3) climate (e. g., number of precipitation free days per year, when emissions tend to a maximum).

Because predictive equations allow for emission factor adjustment to specific conditions, they should be used instead of the factors given in Table 8.19.1-1 whenever emission estimates are needed for sources in a specific sand and gravel processing facility. However, the generally higher quality ratings assigned to these equations are applicable only if (1) reliable values of correction parameters have been determined for the specific sources of interest, and (2) the correction parameter values lie within the ranges found in developing the equations. Section 11.2 lists measured properties of aggregate materials used in operations similar to the sand and gravel industry, and these properties can be used to approximate correction parameter values for use in the predictive emission factor equations, in the event that site specific values are not available. Use of mean correction parameter values from Chapter 11 reduces the quality ratings of the emission factor equations by at least one level.

Since emissions from sand and gravel operations usually are in the form of fugitive dust, control techniques applicable to fugitive dust sources are appropriate. Some successful control techniques used for haul roads are application of dust suppressants, paving, route modifications, soil stabilization, etc.; for conveyors, covering and wet suppression; for storage piles, wet dust suppression, windbreaks, enclosure and soil stablizers; and for conveyor and batch transfer points (loading and unloading, etc.), wet suppression and various methods to reduce freefall distances (e. g., telescopic chutes, stone ladders, and hinged boom stacker conveyors); for screening and other size classification, covering and wet suppression.

Wet suppression techniques include application of water, chemicals and/or foam, usually at crusher or conveyor feed and/or discharge points. Such spray systems at transfer points and on material handling operations have been estimated to reduce emissions 70 to 95 percent.[7] Spray systems can also reduce loading and wind erosion emissions from storage piles of various materials 80 to 90 percent.[8] Control efficiencies depend upon local climatic conditions, source properties and duration of control effectiveness. Wet suppression has a carryover effect downstream of the point of application of water or other wetting agents, as long as the surface moisture content is high enough to cause the fines to adhere to the larger rock particles.

TABLE 8.19.1-1. UNCONTROLLED PARTICULATE EMISSION FACTORS FOR SAND AND GRAVEL PROCESSING PLANTS[a]

Uncontrolled Operation	Emissions by Particle Size Range (aerodynamic diameter)[b]				Emission Factor Rating
	Total Particulate	TSP ($\leq$ 30 μm)	PM_{10} ($\leq$ 10 μm)	Units	
Process Sources[c]					
Primary or secondary crushing (wet)	NA	0.009 (0.018)	NA	kg/Mg (lb/ton)	D
Open Dust Sources[c]					
Screening[d]					
Flat screens (dry product)	NA	0.08 (0.16)	0.06 (0.12)	kg/Mg (lb/ton)	C
Continous drop[c]					
Transfer station	0.014 (0.029)	NA	NA	kg/Mg (lb/ton)	E
Pile formation - stacker	NA	0.065 (0.13)	0.03 (0.06)[e]	kg/Mg (lb/ton)	E
Batch drop[c]					
Bulk loading	0.12 (0.024)	0.028 (0.056)[f]	0.0012 (0.0024)[f]	kg/Mg (lb/ton)	E
Active storage piles[g]					
Active day	NA	14.8 (13.2)	7.1 (6.3)[e]	kg/hectare/day[h] (lb/acre/day)	D
Inactive day (wind erosion only)	NA	3.9 (3.5)	1.9 (1.7)[e]	kg/hectare/day[h] (lb/acre/day)	D
Unpaved haul roads					
Wet materials	i	i	i		D

[a]NA = not available. TSP = total suspended particulate. Predictive emission factor equations, which generally provide more accurate estimates of emissions under specific conditions, are presented in Chapter 11. Factors for open dust sources are not necessarily representative of the entire industry or of a "typical" situtation.
[b]Total particulate is airborne particles of all sizes in the source plume. TSP is what is measured by a standard high volume sampler (see Section 11.2).
[c]References 5-9.
[d]References 4-5. For completely wet operations, emissions are likely to be negligible.
[e]Extrapolation of data, using k factors for appropriate operation from Chapter 11.
[f]For physical, not aerodynamic, diameter.
[g]Reference 6. Includes the following distinct source operations in the storage cycle: (1) loading of aggregate onto storage piles (batch or continuous drop operations), (2) equipment traffic in storage areas, (3) wind erosion of pile (batch or continuous drop operations). Assumes 8 to 12 hours of activity/24 hours.
[h]Kg/hectare (lb/acre) of storage/day (includes areas among piles).
[i]See Section 11.2 for empirical equations.

References for Section 8.19.1

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